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28 March 1977

INTERAGENCY INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Turkish Troops on Cyprus*

1. We continue to estimate present Turkish troop strength on Cyprus at about 30,000 men. This figure is based on reliable evidence [redacted]

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[redacted] and during the past two years it has fluctuated up and down by 1,000 to 2,000.

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2. [redacted] has reported that during the period 29 January-12 March, the number of Turkish troops departing the port of Famagusta exceeded the number arriving by approximately 1,400 men. No Turkish unit withdrawals were observed during this period, nor have any been announced by Turkey since our memorandum of 26 January 1977. (The last unit withdrawal was a commando battalion of an estimated 600 men on 24 January.)

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3. As of now, our best estimate is that this apparent reduction is accounted for by training cycles, transfers, and leaves; similar withdrawals a year ago were followed by replacements in the spring and summer. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that the movement may involve some long-term reduction in force levels.

4. The reasons for the discrepancy between our baseline estimate of 30,000 and the 27,000 figure given to Mr. Clark Clifford [redacted] on 22 February are not entirely clear. We should note, however, that the 27,000 figure is consistent with previous Turkish public claims, in that the Turks claimed a peak of 40,000 and have since claimed reduction of about 13,000. We believe that the Turkish public claims exaggerate both the peak strength and the number of actual reductions.

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* This paper was requested by the Director, Office of Southern European Affairs, State. It was approved by a working group from CIA, DIA, and State/INR, chaired by the NIO for Western Europe.

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DIA review completed.

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5. Ankara has in the past attempted to use troop withdrawals from Cyprus to influence US and international opinion with the appearance of flexibility. This is best illustrated by the timing of announced troop reductions. For example, in February 1976--just before Foreign Minister Caglayangil was scheduled to visit Washington in connection with the Defense Cooperation Agreement--Ankara announced that 2,000 troops would be withdrawn. Another announcement, claiming that a 1,000-man commando battalion would be withdrawn was made in January 1977, just after the new US administration was inaugurated. More often than not, these announced cutbacks have been carried out incompletely or offset by subsequent, unannounced replacements.

6. In present circumstances, however, the Turks have even more incentive than before to appear forthcoming with respect to Cyprus. They could make sizable reductions in troop strength on the island without risk to their preponderant military position. A Turkish withdrawal of a few thousand troops would not jeopardize Turkish superiority over Greek and Greek Cypriot forces on the island. The capabilities of the 5,000-6,000 man Turkish Cypriot force are steadily improving, and Ankara could rapidly reinforce with troops from the mainland.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Officers


28 March 1977

NOTE FOR: Nelson Ledsky

SUBJECT : IIM, Turkish Forces on Cyprus

1. Attached is a short Interagency Intelligence Memorandum, updating our assessment of Turkish troop strength on Cyprus. We timed this paper to be of use to those who will draft the administration's bimonthly report on Cyprus to Congress. We will provide a similar wrapup at the end of May.

2. A copy of the IIM will be sent to Greg Treverton at the NSC.


Keith C. Clark
National Intelligence Officer
for Western Europe

Turkish Troops on Cyprus

[illegible]

* Requests for supplemental copies must be checked with the BJO responsible for that estimate.

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